A Nation Prepared: The Target Capabilities List

To address national preparedness, the President issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8: *National Preparedness* (HSPD-8) which calls for a **National Preparedness Goal** that establishes measurable priorities, targets, and a common approach to developing needed capabilities. The Goal utilizes a ***Capabilities-Based Planning*** approach to help answer the questions "how prepared are we?" "how prepared do we need to be?" and "how do we prioritize efforts to close the gap?" A central objective of Capabilities-Based Planning is to identify target levels of capabilities that Federal, State, local, and tribal entities must achieve to perform critical tasks for homeland security missions. Capabilities are combinations of resources that provide the means to achieve a measurable outcome resulting from performance of one or more critical tasks, under specified conditions and performance standards. Version 1.0 of the **Target Capabilities List** (TCL) identifies 36 target capabilities.

Capabilities-Based Planning

Capabilities-Based Planning is all-hazards planning in an environment of uncertainty. The effect of uncertainty on the risk equation can be reduced by focusing efforts on identifying and developing the critical capabilities from the **TCL** to perform the critical tasks from the **Universal Task List** for the **National Planning Scenarios**. The Scenarios provide common planning factors in terms of the potential scope, magnitude, and complexity of major events that will help to determine the target levels of capability required and apportion responsibility among all potential partners. Developing appropriate capabilities to address this range of scenarios will best prepare the Nation for terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies.

Defining Target Capabilities

A capability may be delivered with any combination of properly planned, organized, equipped, trained, and exercised personnel that achieve the intended outcome. The TCL is designed to assist Federal, State, local, and tribal entities in understanding and defining their respective roles in a major event, the capabilities required to perform a specified set of tasks, and where to obtain additional resources if needed.

Acquiring Needed Capabilities

As these tools and processes are implemented, requests for preparedness assistance will ultimately be expressed as capability needs with clearly defined requirements: why a capability is needed; how the capability will be used; what function the capability will perform; who will need the capability; when the capability will be available; what key performance and other attributes comprise the capability; how the capability will be supported; what skills will be required and how we train responders; and finally, how much the capability will cost.

Just as no single entity would be expected to perform every task, neither would they be expected to have sufficient levels of every capability needed for a major event. Requirements that exceed an entity's capabilities would be secured through mutual aid or formal requests for assistance from other levels of government. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has developed a proposed structure that groups similarly situated entities into Tiers based on risk factors such as total population, population density, and critical infrastructure. The Tiers system will strengthen regional collaboration for incidents of national significance. DHS will coordinate with Federal, State, local, and tribal stakeholders to better define critical infrastructure and assign capabilities to Tiers.

For more information, go to http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/assessments/hspd8.htm